<u>LISTING OF CLAIMS:</u>

Claim 1 has been amended and claims 2-26 are as originally filed.

1. (Currently amended)   A method for distributing program content
in a network, said network comprising a server for providing said program content, a
client operable for communicating with said server across said network, and a caching
server operable for storing a copy of said program content, said method comprising:

establishing a rule defining whether said client is entitled to receive
said program content;

storing said rule on said network;

allowing said client to request said program content from said
network;

comparing said rule to a record describing at least one entitlement
characteristic of said client so as to determine whether said client is entitled to receive
said program content before distributing a key to said client for decrypting said program
content; and

multicasting said program content <u>through use of said caching</u>
<u>server</u>.

2. (Original)   The method as described in claim 1 wherein said rule is
comprised of a method of payment.

3. (Original)   The method as described in claim 1 wherein said rule is
comprised of a subscription identifier.

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4. (Original)   The method as described in claim 1 wherein said rule is comprised of a restriction based on the location of where said program content is to be delivered.

5. (Original)   The method as described in claim 1 wherein said rule is comprised of a restriction based on a content rating for a user.

6. (Original)   The method as described in claim 1, wherein said at least one entitlement characteristic comprises information indicating a physical location of said client.

7. (Original)   The method as described in claim 1, wherein said at least one entitlement characteristic comprises information indicating at least one service subscribed to by said client.

8. (Original)   The method as described in claim 1, wherein said at least one entitlement characteristic comprises data for use in authenticating said client with said caching server.

9. (Original)   The method as described in claim 1, wherein said at least one entitlement characteristic is stored by said client in a ticket.

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10. (Original) The method as described in claim 1, wherein said at least one entitlement characteristic is communicated from said client to said caching server.

11. (Original) The method as described in claim 1 and further comprising not permitting said client to alter said at least one entitlement characteristic.

12. (Original) The method as described in claim 1 and further comprising encrypting said at least one entitlement characteristic so as to prevent said client from altering said at least one entitlement characteristic.

13. (Original) The method as described in claim 1 wherein said multicasting said program content is begun before said comparing said rule to said record describing said at least one entitlement characteristic of said client.

14. (Original) A method for distributing program content in a network, said network comprising a server for storing program content, a client operable for communicating with said server across said network, and a caching server operable for storing a copy of said program content, said method comprising:

establishing a rule defining whether said client is entitled to receive said program content;

allowing said client to request said program content from said server;

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receiving at said server a request from said client for said program content; and

formatting a data record comprising an identifier to identify said program content and said rule for said program content.

15. (Original) The method as described in claim 14 and further comprising:

authenticating said data record.

16. (Original) The method as described in claim 14 and further comprising:

signing said data record so as to allow said caching server to authenticate said data record.

17. (Original) The method as described in claim 16 wherein said authenticating said data record comprises:

utilizing a trusted third party to provide an authentication key to said server for use in signing said data record and a verification key to said caching server for use in authenticating said data record.

18. (Original) The method as described in claim 14 and further comprising:

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conveying said data record to said client.

19. (Original) The method as described in claim 14 and further comprising:

signing said data record; and

conveying said signed data record to said client.

20. (Original) The method as described in claim 14 and further comprising:

signing said data record;

conveying said signed data record to said client; and

conveying said signed data record to said caching server from said client.

21. (Original) The method as described in claim 14 and further comprising:

signing said data record; and

conveying said signed data record to said caching server from said server.

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22. (Original) The method as described in claim 14 and further comprising:

signing said data record;

conveying said signed data record to said client;

conveying said signed data record to said caching server from said client;

conveying an identifier identifying said program content from said client to said caching server;

authenticating said data record at said caching server;

allowing said caching server to determine whether said client is entitled to receive said program content.

23. (Original) A method of distributing program content in a network, said network comprising a server, a client operable for communicating with said server across said network, and a caching server operable for storing a copy of said program content, said method comprising:

receiving a data record for said client for use in determining whether said client is entitled to said program content;

receiving a rule associated with said program content for use by said caching server so as to determine whether said client is entitled to said program content;

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utilizing said data record and said rule so as to determine whether said client is entitled to said program content; and

multicasting said program content.

24. (Original) The method as described in claim 23 and further comprising:

conveying said program material to said client.

25. (Original) The method as described in claim 23 and further comprising:

decrypting said data record with a key received from a trusted third party, wherein said trusted third party is a trusted third party for said caching server and said server.

26. (Original) The method as described in claim 23 wherein said receiving said data record for said client comprises:

receiving said data record from said client.